GREAT CHARACTERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

DOREMUS A. HAYES

Circle No. 3.

BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE GIFT OF TONGUES

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL BOOK EVER WRITTEN

PAUL AND HIS EPISTLES

JOHN AND HIS WRITINGS

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS AND THE BOOK OF ACTS

THE NEW TESTAMENT EPISTLES

Great Characters of the New Testament

By
Doremus A. Hayes

THE METHODIST BOOK CONCERN
NEW YORK CINCINNATI

LAMAR & BARTON
NASHVILLE DALLAS RICHMOND

Copyright, 1920, by
DOREMUS A. HAYES

Printed in the United States of America

First Edition Printed July, 1920
Reprinted October, 1920; December, 1922

The Bible text printed in italics in this volume is taken from the American Standard Edition of the Revised Bible, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons, and is used by permission.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	INTRODUCTION	7
I.	JUDAS MACCABEUS, A LEADER OF PRE-NEW-TESTAMENT TIMES	9
II.	JOHN THE BAPTIST	17
III.	JESUS THE LEADER	24
IV.	JESUS THE TEACHER	31
V.	JESUS THE MESSIAH	38
VI.	SIMON PETER, THE LEADER OF THE APOSTLES	45
VII.	PAUL THE MISSIONARY	51
VIII.	PAUL THE PASTOR	57
IX.	PAUL THE STATESMAN AND WRITER	63
X.	THE UNKNOWN APOSTOLATE	69
XI.	JOHN THE BELOVED	76
XII.	HOW THE NEW TESTAMENT WAS WRITTEN	83

the fathers in the prophets, . . . hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son. . . ." The language is significant. God hath spoken in the prophets. He hath spoken in the apostles. Above all hath he spoken in his Son. The characters and lives of the great men of the Bible are in a very real and true sense the Word of God. To become acquainted with them, to understand the motives by which they were moved, to see them in action, to hold fellowship with them, is to understand the thought and purpose and will of God.

There is a kind of Bible study that has a tendency to become lost in the mechanics of the process. Students have been known to become so absorbed in the problems of authorship, dates, and textual criticism as to miss entirely the great moral and spiritual meanings of the Word. A study of the lives of the great men of the Bible is not subject to this danger.

The study of the textbook should be accompanied by a parallel reading and study of the Bible. The extent of such study to be expected in a particular case can be best determined by the teacher. In every instance some assignments for reading and study should be made.

THE EDITORS.

CHAPTER I

JUDAS MACCABEUS, A LEADER OF PRE-NEW-TESTAMENT TIMES

The eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews has been called the Westminster Abbey of the New Testament. It contains the honor roll of God's heroes of the faith. It lists the great names from Abel to Moses and tells something of their great deeds. Then, as time fails in which to make the list complete, the author gives a summary of the victories of the later heroes down to the time of the Maccabees. Of these he says that they were "destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves, and the holes of the earth." In First Maccabees we are told how Mattathias and his sons were made to flee into the mountains, and in Second Maccabees the Jews tell how they kept the Feast of Tabernacles "when they were wandering in the fields and the caves after the manner of wild beasts." The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews may have had these passages in mind when he wrote

the closing words of his summary, and he thought that while the world was not worthy of these heroes among the Maccabees, they were well worthy of a place in his list. We likewise may deem them worthy of our study.

The armies of Alexander the Great had conquered all of the East, and upon his death his empire was divided among his generals. The land of the Jews fell to one of these and so came under the Greek dominion and influence. It was the aim of the Greek conquerors to introduce Greek culture and civilization among their subjects in the Orient. Many of the Jews were ready to adopt the new customs, and in the course of time most of them seem to have joined themselves with the heathen and to have forgotten the strict observance of the Jewish law. There were the pious, who clung to the traditions of the fathers, but more and more the people seemed inclined to forsake these and to enjoy the greater freedom of the foreign ways.

At last Antiochus Epiphanes thought that the right time had come to root out the Jewish religion altogether and to put in its place the heathen worship and faith. He took possession of the city of Jerusalem and of the Temple. He profaned the holy place. He ordered that all the Jewish sacrifices should cease, that the Sabbath should no longer be kept, and that the Jews should build altars to the

heathen gods and do all their worshiping before these. The rich and those in political positions and even some of the priests were disposed to fall into line with the royal decree. The king's will was done in Jerusalem, but things did not go so well in the country.

A priest named Mattathias had withdrawn to a little village some thirteen miles west of Bethel; and when the king's messengers came there (to Modin) to compel the people to sacrifice to the heathen gods, Mattathias told them that even if all the nations obeyed King Antiochus so as to depart from the law of the fathers, he and his sons and his brethren would be true to that law until death. Then when a Jew came forward to sacrifice to the idols, Mattathias slew him and also the king's agent and representative and then called upon all who would be faithful to Israel's God to follow him and his sons into the mountains, where they might escape from the wrath and power of the king. It was a most daring act. It was raising the flag of revolt against a great empire. It seemed utterly hopeless. This father and his five sons set out to free the Jews from the hated foreign tyranny. Many joined them, and a considerable army was raised. When Mattathias came to die he called all his sons together and recited to them his own list of the heroes of the faith in all the Jewish history

and exhorted them to consider that in all the generations none that trusted God ever had failed in strength. Then he appointed Judas, his third son, to be the leader of the army and to manage the war of the people.

The after history justified his choice. Judas came to be known as "the Hammerer," who dealt sturdy blow upon blow upon the enemy until the Jewish arms came to be famous and respected through the whole world. In one year he had defeated the Syrian generals Apollonius and Seron, although they had superior forces, and his own people had tried to dissuade him from attempting conclusions with them. Judas replied: "There is no difference in the sight of the God of heaven to deliver with a great multitude or with a small company; for the success of war is not in the multitude of the army, but strength cometh from heaven." His faith was honored in the complete overthrow of the foe.

Antiochus was angry as well as very disappointed, and he sent half of his army to destroy these rebellious Jews. His kinsman Lysias was in charge of the expedition, and three famous generals commanded the forces. They arranged beforehand with slave dealers to purchase the Jewish prisoners they were sure to capture and came on with a great multitude of men. Judas and his army fasted and

prayed for one day at Mizpah and then went out to meet them; for Judas had said to them: "It is better for us to die in battle than to see the evils of our nation. Nevertheless, as it shall be the will of God in heaven, so be it done." In this spirit of resignation to the worst and of faith for the best they set forth and fell upon the main army and defeated it and set fire to its camp; and when a detachment sent out to entrap them came later and saw the flames, its members were seized with great fear and fled away into their own land. It was a great and almost incredible victory, and all the Jews were ready to say with Judas, "There is one that redeemeth and delivereth Israel."

The next year Lysias himself came with a still larger army, which Judas decisively defeated. Then Judas and his brethren went up to Jerusalem, where the Temple worship had been neglected for three years. They found shrubs growing up in the courts of the sanctuary as in a forest or on the mountains, its gate burned, its chambers thrown down, and its altar profaned. They built a new altar, restored all the holy vessels, and renewed the Temple worship. A Feast of Dedication was celebrated at this time, and this feast was continued, year after year, as long as the Temple stood. Jesus walked in the Temple porch during the celebration of the Feast of the Dedication in his day, when the Jews took

up stones to stone him because they thought that he, being a man, made himself God.

The Maccabees never had been defeated thus far in their struggle, and their victories continued for some time longer. They freed from their imprisonment those of their countrymen who had been shut up in the fortresses of Gilead and Galilee and began to think of political independence as a possibility for their people. However, the odds against them were too great at this time. Lysias advanced again with a great army, and at Bethzur, Judas suffered his first defeat. A crisis in the home government called Lysias away at this juncture, and he made a treaty with Judas and granted religious liberty to the Jews in the hope that they would cease to trouble him. This was the prize for which the Maccabees had fought, so there was great rejoicing throughout the land. Judas was regarded as the savior of the national religion and the preserver of the prescribed worship of the one true God.

Antiochus died, and Lysias was killed by a political rival; but the new king sent a new army into Judæa at once. Judas met this army and defeated it twice, but realized that the imperial forces were too strong for his little band to cope with, so tried to make an alliance with the new power of Rome; but before Roman help could reach him, a new

army, so superior in numbers that it seemed hopeless to oppose it, entered Judæa. Most of his men deserted him, but Judas made a brave stand with eight hundred faithful ones, who did their best but were defeated. Judas himself was slain. All the people of Israel bewailed him with great lamentation and mourned for him many days. They said, "How is the mighty man fallen, that saved the people of Israel!"

Jonathan, the brother of Judas, succeeded him in the leadership of the Jewish forces and was quite successful both in diplomacy and battle. When he was made a prisoner and afterward slain, his brother Simon took his place. Simon was the last of the brothers and he completed their work by gaining for his people both religious liberty and political independence. For thirty years they had carried on the war their father had begun and they had been successful beyond their fondest hopes. Their descendants were not equal to them; and although they remained the ruling family in Judæa almost down to the time of Jesus, their weakness and their corruption proved that they had not preserved either the pious or the patriotic spirit of their fathers. The memory of the first Maccabees kept alive the nationalistic spirit among the Jews and their great hope of a coming Deliverer. As a people they were intensely patriotic and incurably

sanguine of their future greatness and dominance among the nations of the earth. When their Redeemer had come, it may well be that the history of Judas the Hammerer and the fortunes of his family and their dynasty helped Jesus of Nazareth, during the days of the great temptation, to conclude that any lasting redemption of his people and of the race was not to be found in militarism and violence and force, and that the kingdom of God could come only through the preaching and the practice of righteousness, peace, and love.

Questions for Your Consideration

How far do you think that the church ought to be subordinate to the state?

Do you believe that patriotism and religion ever can be antagonistic in their demands? Can you give examples?

What would you list as the virtues of Judas, and what, if any, were his faults?

Books for Reading and Study

The books of Maccabees.

The Age of the Maccabees, Streane.

History of the Jewish People: Maccabean and Roman Periods, Riggs.

CHAPTER II

JOHN THE BAPTIST

The glory of the Maccabees had faded away. Their dynasty had come to an end. The Romans now ruled the world, and Herod was king in Jerusalem. The Temple worship still went on, but the Jews were a subject people. They were waiting for the Messiah promised in the prophets and hoping that he would be a better Saviour to the people of Israel than even Judas the Hammerer had been. Then a preacher appeared in the wilderness of Judæa—a man of strange appearance and of strange power. The report of his message spread through all the land, and multitudes went out from the synagogues and the cities to see this new prophet and to listen to all he had to say. He became the most popular preacher of the day, for he was an honest and earnest man and he had a message that was well worth speaking—a message of both judgment and hope.

This messenger was John. It had been prophesied of him at the time of his birth that he should

turn many of the children of Israel unto the Lord their God and make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him. He was a forerunner—a herald of a better day. He was of priestly descent, but he possessed the spirit and the power of the prophet Elijah. He was reared in the solitudes and lived an abstinent life, studying the Scriptures and communing with nature until he was prepared for his public message and ministry.

For more than three centuries the voice of prophecy had not been heard in the land. The last of the Old-Testament prophets had been Malachi, and that name meant "my messenger." This man was a new Malachi, a new messenger from God. The preachers of the Christian faith were to be called "apostles," and that word meant "those sent." This man was a preacher of the Messianic kingdom at hand; he was a "man sent from God." He was a Malachi-apostle. He was to close the old dispensation and to usher in the new.

John came to call the people to repentance and to bear witness of Jesus. As the people received his message, he baptized them as a symbol of their readiness to welcome the Messiah when he came. John preached not to start a revival, to create a sensation, or to astonish the people with his eloquence; he came as a witness, that he might bear witness of the light. That was the whole of his

work, and he did it well. The revival, the sensation, the astonished and repentant multitudes, came in due order. They were the result of honest, persistent, fearless witnessing. A witness is of value only in so far as his testimony is important. John realized this to the full. He declared that he was only a voice, but he had something to say which was worth hearing. He was of no consequence, but his message was all-important. The people believed it, and multitudes of them were baptized in the Jordan, repenting their sins.

There is no finer illustration of unselfishness to be found in the pages of history than that furnished by John the Baptist. He must have had his temptation in the wilderness as well as his Lord. When the multitudes flocked out from the cities to hear him, he found himself the center of a great popular movement. He seemed to be sweeping everything before him. There were those among his enthusiastic followers who said: "Nothing like this has been seen or heard in Israel for hundreds of years. This is a great prophet. Possibly the greatest of the prophets is here." There were some who were saying, "He is Elijah." There were some who were whispering to each other, "He is the Christ." Was he never tempted to claim any of these titles? Did it never occur to him that he might use for his own benefit some of the reputation thus thrust upon

him? It would seem that he must have been more than human if it did not. We have seen a modern religious leader yield to just such a temptation and call himself "the Second Elijah"; but there is no slightest trace in the history of even a momentary yielding to the temptation on the part of John. Like the Master he was continually conqueror. A deputation from Jerusalem, sent by the Pharisees, questioned him as to his person and mission. He told them that he was not the Christ and not Elijah and not the prophet; he said that he was only a voice. But that voice, while claiming nothing for itself, was proclaiming a most startling bit of news: *"In the midst of you standeth one whom ye know not, . . . the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose."*

Jesus was standing there, and he heard what John had to say concerning him. Long afterward, at Cæsarea Philippi, did he recall this scene and think of the contrast presented? Multitudes here; the little group of disciples there. The priests and Levites questioning here or repeating to John the questions raised everywhere by the people in those days; Jesus himself questioning there concerning what the people were saying and thinking. The first question asked of John the Baptist here, "Art thou the Christ?"; the first answer made to the Christ there, "Some say that thou art John the

Baptist." The second opinion of the public, presented to each—"Thou art Elijah"—was emphatically rejected by both; yet there was a sense in which both were Elijahs. Did not Jesus say of John the Baptist: *"All the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye are willing to receive it, this is Elijah, that is to come"?* And did not John the Baptist say of Christ, *"I indeed baptize you with water; but . . . he shall baptize you . . . in fire,"* even as Elijah did? Did not Christ ascend to heaven, even as Elijah did? What does Elijah mean but "my God is Jehovah"? and did any man ever live who was a truer Elijah than Jesus or one who could say in a fuller sense:

"God is my King of old,
Working salvation in the midst of the earth"?

Both series of questions and answers led up to the great confession here of John the Baptist, *"In the midst of you standeth one . . . the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose";* there of Peter for the apostles, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus heard the confession in both instances. He said to Peter, "Upon this rock I will build my church." He said of John, *"Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist."* That was John's reward for his self-abnegation. He said that he was not Elijah and he was not the

prophet; and Jesus said that he was greater than these.

John maintained his humility to the end. When his disciples became a little jealous of the growing popularity of Jesus and came to him saying, *"Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond the Jordan, to whom thou hast borne witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him,"* John answered and said: *"He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, that standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is made full. He must increase, but I must decrease."* Here was a man in whom self had been conquered. No wonder that Jesus said that among the ancients there was none greater than he. In the church calendar John the Baptist's day is midsummer day—the twenty-fourth of June. After this the days decrease in length. The birthday of Jesus is celebrated at Christmas-time, in midwinter. After Christmas the days increase in length. John was the morning star of the new day in God's grace. His light was dimmed only in the greater glory of the Son.

John called all men to repentance and he included the king. The king feared him for his influence and, because of his message, put him in prison. John was an ascetic and fearlessly bore his witness against the folly and the vice of his day. It was

his fate to have a dancing girl bring about his beheading. His disciples laid his corpse in a tomb. That tomb ought to bear upon it the eulogy of Jesus followed by the words *"This my joy therefore is made full."* Judas the Hammerer had left a great memory; John the Baptist revived and intensified a great hope. A greater Leader than either of these was at hand. Who and what would he be? The whole people waited for the self-revelation of Jesus.

For Your Thought

How do you think that the work of John the Baptist relates itself to the Old Testament?

How does it relate itself to the work of Jesus?

What do you think is the meaning of the eulogy of Jesus upon John?

Books for Reading and Study

John the Baptist: His Life and Work, Houghton.
John the Baptist, Reynolds.
John the Baptist, Feather.
John the Loyal, Robertson.

CHAPTER III

JESUS THE LEADER

JUDAS the Hammerer had been a hero of the faith. He had been a great leader of the people. He and his brothers had been rebels and revolutionists. They had fought for freedom of worship and then for the independence of their land. They had had the spirit of Samuel, who hewed Agag to pieces before the Lord; they had had the spirit of Elijah, who slew the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal. They had had no mercy upon the enemies of the people of God. Again and again in the history we read that when they had taken a city they devoted the people of that city to utter destruction and burned its towers with fire and all that were in them. Again and again we read that they slew every male with the edge of the sword and made a great slaughter of them. They were military leaders and heroes. They took up the sword and they perished with the sword. They fought for liberty or death and they attained both liberty and death. In a few generations their family line was extinct, and the liberties for which they had fought were lost again. The hated

Idumean was on the throne, and the Roman power was supreme in the land.

Jesus could have had a more glorious military career than Judas the Hammerer ever dreamed of. He could have become a world conqueror. All the kingdoms of the world could have been his if he had been willing to gain them by force. What good he could have done in the world if he had chosen such a career! Had not Alexander the Great founded a world empire and spread the Greek culture wherever his victorious armies came? Would it not be possible to spread the Jewish faith in the same way? The heathen abominations could be done away, the cruelties and oppressions of the nations could be abolished, the captives could be released, the bruised could be set at liberty, and the abuses of the poor could be brought to an end. There would be no limit to the possibilities of good opened to Jesus if he once attained to the throne of the world. He would be the most benevolent Emperor the mind of man can conceive. With the ideal Ruler the world might be made into the ideal kingdom of God. Was it only a dream impossible to realize? Jesus declared it one of the real temptations of the wilderness, and possibly it was the greatest temptation he had to encounter in life.

Judas had won great victories with only a handful of men. God had been with him, and the God

of heaven could deliver with a great multitude or with a small company; for none that trust in him fail in strength. Nothing would be impossible to the faith of Jesus. He was the Prince and Perfecter of the faith that Judas and all the ancient worthies of Israel had shown. What they had accomplished was only a faint suggestion of what he could accomplish along the same lines. Had they subdued kingdoms, waxed mighty in war, and turned to flight armies of aliens? Then Jesus, with his faith in the Father, could put to flight all his foes and become a world Conqueror and establish himself at the head of the universal empire of mankind. The people were looking for a redeemer like Judas, a temporal monarch who would lead their armies and win their liberties and make them the masters of the world. Would Jesus answer to that expectation and be the Leader they desired? With a little compromise of principle and a little pulling of wires it could be done, and he could have all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them for his reward.

Would he be a leader of that kind? Would he win his kingdom by force? Would he spread his faith by the aid of the sword? Would he fight like Judas and make a great slaughter of his enemies and so obtain peace for the world? At the beginning of his ministry Jesus faced these questions and

decided that the method of Judas would not be his method. That method had failed so lamentably in the long run. No kingdom won by the sword had stood for any great length of time. His kingdom must be world-wide and eternal.

John the Baptist was a leader too. His influence among the people was so great that even after his death the chief priests and the scribes and the elders did not dare to say that his baptism was not from heaven lest all the people would stone them. John expected a still greater leader to come after him and prophesied that this leader would go through the nation with a winnowing fan in his hand and would separate the chaff from the wheat and then would burn up the chaff even as Judas the Hammerer had burned up the towers of the pagan cities with all the men who were in them. He said that the Coming One, who was greater than he, would have an ax in his hand and would hew down all the trees that did not bring forth good fruit, even as Samuel had hewed Agag to pieces before the Lord. According to the preaching of John the Baptist the ministry of Jesus was to be one of vengeance and wrath. He would visit quick judgment upon wrongdoers and would make the times hot for all who did not choose the right.

Jesus came, and he became a great Leader; but he was a great disappointment to John. He did

not set up a judgment seat, according to John's advertisement. He was not blazing with denunciation much of the time. He was not burning anybody in unquenchable fire. His ministry for the most part was one of healing and blessing. He preached good tidings instead of instant and constant woe. John the Baptist could not understand it. He sent from his prison to know if Jesus really were the One they had been expecting, or whether they must look for another. Jesus sent back to John this message: "I cause the blind to receive their sight and the lame to walk and the lepers to be cleansed and the deaf to hear and the dead to be raised up, and I preach good tidings to the poor. I have decided that if I am to be a leader among the people I will be a leader in helpful and gracious ministries. Do not find any occasion of stumbling in me on this account."

His conception of his leadership differed from that of John the Baptist. In that first sermon preached at Nazareth he laid down the program for his whole career. He found it in the words of the ancient prophet and he read those words down to the statement that the Spirit had anointed him to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord; and then he closed the book. It was not the end of the sentence, but the next words were "[*and to proclaim*] *the day of vengeance of our God.*" John the Baptist

would have read those words with relish; Jesus would not read them at all. That was not his mission. His message was a message of grace. He would rather leave the sentence unfinished than to leave any doubt in any mind upon that point.

Jesus as definitely rejected the ideal of John the Baptist as he did that of Judas Maccabeus. John had more zeal than love. He had little or no patience with the weak. He had little or no sympathy with the sinner. Jesus chose to be a loving Lord, the patient Sufferer, the compassionate Christ. He made the right choice. The verdict of the world has given him the leadership of the race. The great leaders have been the religious leaders, and there is no one of these—Mohammed, Zoroaster, Buddha, Confucius, or Socrates—who will venture to dispute the supremacy with him. His dominion to-day has no limit either of land or of race. World-wide and eternal, it will have no equal on earth.

Napoleon is reported to have said: "Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires; but upon what foundations did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus alone founded his empire upon love, and at this hour millions of men would die for him. . . . I die before my time, and my body will be given back to the earth to become the food of worms. Such is the fate of him who has been called the great Napoleon. What an

abyss between my deep misery and the eternal kingdom of Christ, which is proclaimed, loved, and adored, and which is extending over the whole earth!" That sums it all up. Jesus is the great Leader of the race because he leads by persuasion and not by compulsion. He does not drive men from him by denunciation; he draws them to him by sympathy and love. His kingdom of love, supreme over the affections of millions on earth out of every nation and people and kindred and tongue, pushes its conquests over the continents and into the isles of the sea; and it will conquer them all in the end.

Questions for You to Answer

What was the leadership of Judas Maccabeus and its result?

What was its attraction to Jesus?

Why did Jesus refuse to yield to it?

What was John the Baptist's expectation concerning Jesus?

How was it disappointed?

What leadership was preferred by Jesus?

What is the result of his choice?

Books for Reading and Study

Imago Christi: the Example of Jesus Christ, Stalker.

The Man of Nazareth, Anderson.

Ecce Homo, Seeley.

CHAPTER IV

JESUS THE TEACHER

THERE is a tradition in the north country that a king once went among his people in disguise. He saw many things that were evil and such things as kings seldom see. He did many things that were good and such things as kings only can do. But the people neither suspected the kingly presence nor recognized his kingly power. Then, one day, the king spoke to the people, and they wondered at his gracious words; and they said one to another: "It is the king's voice. We have the king here among us. These are the words of a king."

This tradition of the north country is a parable that suggests a weightier truth. The King of kings and Lord of lords, the only begotten Son of God, dwelt once among men as a man. His deity was veiled in his humanity, and multitudes of the people among whom he moved never suspected a Presence divine. *"He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not."* He did such works as no other man did, and often appealed to the witness of his works that the Father

had sent him and that the Father was with him. One winter season, at the time of the Feast of the Dedication, which Judas the Hammerer had first celebrated, Jesus made this appeal, and those who heard him took up stones to stone him; for no wonderful works could convince those hearts, which were colder than the winter wind and frozen hard in their unbelief, that a man so simply clad and so plain in his appearance, so evidently poor and obscure, could be the expected King.

Jesus went quietly on his way, talking about the Father and the kingdom; about faith and purity and love; about the way, the truth, and the life; and after a time there were those who began to realize that these were indeed the words of a King. On a mountainside Jesus sat and taught his disciples and the multitudes from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judæa, and Syria who had gathered to hear such teaching as no one of the scribes could give them. The Master unfolded the constitution of the kingdom he had come to proclaim, marked out the broad lines of distinction between his spiritual and essential religion and all the old ritual worships and creeds, squared all that was new in his teaching with all that was good in the old, and then proceeded to build slowly and securely the glorious edifice of Christianity's ideal and faith.

He laid for its foundations the Beatitudes of the

poor in spirit and the pure in heart, the mourners, the merciful, the meek, the peacemakers and the persecuted, the hungering and the thirsting after righteousness; and he declared that to them belonged the Kingdom, the Father, and the faith. As the keystone of the structure he lifted high the command, *"Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."* The firm pillars of support all around were prayer and righteousness and love. At the end Jesus likened the structure thus reared to the house built upon a rock.

He said of it: "He is a wise man who will dwell therein. The rains may descend, and the floods come, and the winds blow and beat upon this house, and it will not fall, for it is founded upon the rock."

It was all very plain and simple teaching. There was no fine philosophy, no scientific exposition, no labored rhetoric, no pomp of power; just one holy Man in the midst of the multitudes who knew all hearts and their deepest longings and who knew where they could find satisfaction and peace. He used many illustrations. He repeated his truths many times. He was very direct in his warning and exhortation. His words were as sunbeams of hope to darkened consciences and as the bread of life and the water of life to the spiritually famishing souls who listened that day. His words went straight as arrows to their marks and were sharp

as swords for the piercing of hearts and the dividing asunder of soul peace and secret sin. When he had finished, the people were astonished and said one to another: "He speaks as one having authority. We have the King here among us. These are the words of a King."

Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, and the two talked together about the things of the Kingdom; and Jesus said to Nicodemus: "You must be born anew. Marvel not how these things can be. Are you a master in Israel and know you not that it must all be of God's power and God's grace and God's love? God has so loved the world that he has given his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." As he listened the old man bowed his head in reverence before the young Man's wisdom and worth. Nicodemus said to Jesus, *"Thou art a teacher come from God."*

The Roman governor, a cultured man of the world, an experienced man of affairs, sat in the judgment hall; and Jesus stood before him to answer for his life. Pilate examined and cross-examined the alleged culprit, but could find no guilt in him. On the contrary, he seemed awed by something extraordinary in this man. He asked Jesus, "Art thou then a king?" Jesus answered, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the

world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone who is of the truth heareth my voice, and everyone who is of the truth recognizes my voice and knows whether or no I am the king." It was even so. His speech betrayed him to those who had ears to hear and hearts to understand. The servant of the high priest said to Peter at the time of his denial, "Thou also art one of them; thy speech betrayeth thee." In the same way, when many of the disciples turned away and walked no more with the Master, and Jesus asked the twelve if they would go too, Peter answered him: "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. Thy speech betrayeth thee. We have listened to thy words and we have come to believe and to know that the King is indeed among us, for thou art the holy one of God."

"Never man spake like this man." That was the testimony of the officials sent to arrest him. They had nothing to do but to obey orders and they had been ordered to arrest Jesus. His trial, with its sentence or acquittal, would come later. It lay in other hands. The only duty of the officers of the law was to make the arrest without question or delay. Whether they considered the accused innocent or guilty did not come into consideration. They were not the judges; they were simply the agents of the court. If they did not make the arrest when

ordered they would forfeit their position and themselves become culprits in the eyes of the authorities. Therefore, the Pharisees and chief priests who had sent their subordinates out to arrest Jesus had no thought but that they would soon return with the Teacher bound and helpless in their hands.

They believed that this Jesus was a pestilent fellow—a revolutionist who would destroy the old order of things, about whom the people were whispering already that he must be the expected King. His career must be ended immediately. They waited for what seemed a very long time. Jesus was teaching publicly in the Temple: why did not the officers bring him at once? At last they appeared, but Jesus was not with them. "Why have you not brought him?" was the sharp query; and the strange answer given was "Never man spake like this man." They had gone to arrest him and had been themselves arrested by the authority in his voice and the majesty of his message. They had listened in spellbound admiration and wonder. They went back empty-handed, and their only excuse for the failure to perform that simple duty of making a public arrest was the simple statement: "We could not. Never man spake like this man."

It has been the judgment of the centuries. Both friends and foes have said it: "A great Teacher has walked among his people. Never man spake

as he spake." Jesus said: *"Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."* Shall we apply this statement to himself? Then all the history of the church and all the history of the world go to show that never man spake like this man, for he had the words of eternal life. He was a Teacher sent from God. His words are treasured above those of any other teacher of the race. In them is to be found the saving truth for all men.

For Additional Study

What proportion of the teaching of Jesus do you think is preserved in the New Testament?

In what respects would you say that the teaching of Jesus was superior to that of other religious leaders?

Can you give an outline of the Sermon on the Mount?

What are three or four of the distinctive features in the teaching of Jesus?

Books for Reading and Study

The Kingdom of God, Bruce.
The Training of the Twelve, Bruce.
The Revelation of Jesus, Gilbert.

CHAPTER V

JESUS THE MESSIAH

THE word "Messiah" is a Hebrew word, and the word "Christ" is a Greek word. Both words mean "the Anointed One." The Samaritan woman at Jacob's well said to Jesus: *"I know that Messiah cometh (he that is called Christ): when he is come, he will declare unto us all things."* Then Jesus said to her, *"I that speak unto thee am he."* To know what those titles meant to each of them we must look back into the Old Testament. There we shall find that certain persons were anointed by way of preparation for special services.

Saul, the son of Kish, searched unsuccessfully for his father's asses that had strayed. His servant advised him to counsel with Samuel the seer. Samuel had been forewarned of his coming and of the Lord's will concerning him. He met Saul cordially, and they feasted together. Then, before parting, Samuel took a vial of oil, poured it upon Saul's head, kissed him, and said, "Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his

inheritance?" For a time Saul was a king by divine right; but then the Spirit of the Lord departed from him, and an evil spirit troubled him. Then Samuel took a horn of oil and anointed David in the presence of his father and his elder brethren, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day. David's son Solomon was anointed by Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet; and they blew a trumpet, and all the people shouted, "Long live king Solomon!" Thereafter the Jewish kings always were inaugurated with this simple ceremony of anointing with the holy oil. After this ceremony they were the Lord's anointed and under the Lord's protection, and against them no man was permitted to put forth his hand.

At Horeb, the mount of God, Elijah listened to the still small voice, and the Lord said to him, "Anoint Hazael to be king over Syria, and Jehu to be king over Israel, and Elisha to be prophet in thy room." Kings were anointed, and prophets were anointed too. Consecrated hands poured the holy oil upon some prophet's head, and the fullness of the Spirit rested upon him. The secret counsels of the Most High were intrusted to him. He was inspired and prophesied. His voice of benediction and of malediction was the authoritative voice of his God. He was a seer and a saint. He was one of the Lord's anointed concerning whom he com-

manded, "Touch not mine anointed ones, and do my prophets no harm."

In that other typical office of the priesthood there was the anointed priest. All the priests were anointed to their holy office, but the chief priest stood at their head as the anointed one. He was given the peculiar dress of the breastplate and the miter, the ephod and its robe made of gold, blue, red, crimson, and fine white linen. He wore the twelve precious stones of the Urim and Thummim. His ephod was clasped at the shoulders with two large onyx stones, each engraved with the names of six tribes of Israel. He alone was privileged to enter the holy of holies in the inner temple. There once a year, on the great day of atonement, he sprinkled the blood of the sin offering upon the mercy seat and, in the revealed presence of the Lord Most High, he put the incense upon the fire before the altar until its rising cloud shielded him from the dazzling glory that covered the covenant ark. He alone ever entered in to that within the veil. He was the Lord's anointed priest.

The Jews had anointed priests and prophets and kings; and the whole nation knew that the anointing of the kings and of the high priest and of the chosen prophets was only the foreshadowing of the higher anointing to be given to that consummate flower of their race—the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed

One—toward whose coming they had looked, for whose coming they had longed for many centuries. The Messiah was to be a King—"great David's greater Son"—whose glory would far excel that of Solomon, and of whose dominion there would be no end. The Messiah was to be a Priest, who was to abide a Priest continuously—not after the law of a carnal commandment but after the power of an endless life—made a High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, who was both king and priest and greater even than Father Abraham. The Messiah was to be the Prophet of the Highest, come from far—one with the Father, whose word would be true and steadfast, since it was the word of Him who sent him. Prophet, Priest, and King, the triple anointing would be upon him; and he would know how to rule, he would know the secrets of the holy place, he would know with prophetic certainty all things.

Jesus told the woman at the well that he was the Messiah, but it was difficult for her to believe it. He was not the Messiah of the popular expectation. That Messiah was to be a monarch and would deliver his people from foreign tyranny, even as Judas and the Maccabees had done; this Messiah was a weary, thirsty traveler, appearing like any ordinary man. If he was an anointed King, he must be in disguise. Some of the people were dis-

posed to think that was true. When Jesus asked the disciples what the people were saying about him, they told him that some thought he was Elijah, and some thought he was Jeremiah, and some thought he was some one of the other prophets or even the great Prophet promised in the Messianic day. When Jesus fed the multitudes in the wilderness, they were so impressed with the wonder of it that they said, "Of a truth this is the Prophet that cometh into the world," and they were about to take him by force and make him King when Jesus withdrew into the mountain and thus defeated their design.

They were ready to recognize him as their Messiah, but he kept disappointing them all the time. In his discourses he claimed a great deal, but he did not claim enough. If he had claimed to be the promised King and if he had set about seeking glory from men, they would have flocked to his standard. If he had raised the red flag of revolution and had made a bid for popularity by any demonstration against the Roman power, they would have rallied to him. He said that he was the Messiah, but he did not do what they expected the Messiah to do: he did not make his glory manifest to all men and he refused to be crowned the nation's King. The Messiah would be no Sabbath-breaker. The Messiah never would say that he could do nothing of himself. The Messiah would seek for glory, and

he would have glory. He would be a glorious Messiah, not a plain and ordinary man like this Jesus of Nazareth. So most of the people reasoned; and it did seem reasonable that the Anointed One should be something more than a poor peasant, a leader only along spiritual lines, and a teacher only of spiritual truths.

They rejected him at last and crucified him as a criminal. Then God raised him from the dead and made him King of kings and Lord of lords forever. He himself had told his townspeople at Nazareth that the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, anointing him to preach the gospel to the poor. He was the anointed Prophet of the Highest through all his ministry, as he will be for all future time. Peter preached to the household of Cornelius that God had anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, and that he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him. What he began to do there in Palestine he continues to do in and through his church. He is anointed with kingly power, and this power is at the service of his people for evermore. A large part of the Epistle to the Hebrews was written to show that Jesus is the great High Priest, who has passed through the heavens and entered once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption and, therefore,

having sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high. He is the one great Prophet, Priest, and King of the Christian world. He is the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One, through whom the world has received and will receive its spiritual truth, its spiritual power, and its eternal salvation. That was the gospel upon which the Christian Church was founded. "Know assuredly that God hath made the crucified Jesus both Lord and Christ." Those who accept the crucified and exalted Christ as their Saviour take his name upon them and are called Christians. They are the anointed followers of the Anointed One.

Questions to Think About

How were the typical anointings in the Old Testament fulfilled in Jesus?

Do you think that anointings or other ceremonies are of any inherent value?

How far do you believe that Christians may realize the results of the triple anointings now?

Books for Reading and Study

The Life and Times of Jesus, the Messiah, Edersheim.

The Life of Christ, Stalker.

The Jesus of History, Glover.

The Days of His Flesh, Smith.

The Life of Christ, Dawson.

CHAPTER VI

SIMON PETER, THE LEADER OF THE APOSTLES

PETER was a very likable man. Everybody liked him. Jesus, the other apostles, the members of the early church, all liked him; and we like him too, because he is so much like us. Peter had not Paul's head nor John's heart nor James's saintliness and stability; but I venture to say that he was at once the most heady and hearty and human of all the apostles. He gave so much clearer evidence of all the frailties which flesh and blood are heir to; he was a better example of growth in grace than any or all of his associates. He was so human, so like the rest of us in everything, that his history comes nearer our own; and the glimpses we have of his spiritual experience seem like glimpses into the depths of our own hearts. His biography more easily than that of the other apostles can be rewritten as the Autobiography of the Common Man. It was said long ago, "In Peter is more of human nature than in any other of the apostles."

He was a heady, hasty man. Headlong and headstrong, he went about the task set before him

without waiting to plan out methods of procedure and without any calculation of consequences. If Peter had lived in these days he would have had an automobile as he went here and there and everywhere about his apostolic business, simply because he would have found it the most rapid means of locomotion in making a large number of short trips; and even after he had learned to manage the thing like a professional he would have been a public menace every day of his life simply because of his failure to look ahead a little and his proneness to rush on regardless of any obstacle in his way. No man ever had walked on the water before, but Peter jumped over the side of the boat to do it without stopping to think that it was impossible. The other disciples asked whether they should defend Jesus; and while they were asking, Peter had drawn his sword and cut off the right ear of the servant of the high priest. Peter was the sort of man who would set the whole world on fire while some other people were getting ready to light a match.

Peter was an impulsive, impetuous man. He was the creature of the moment; he acted without reflection. Did Jesus ask, *"Who say ye that I am?"* the others were ready to think about it a while and then more carefully and judiciously to formulate a creed; but all of Peter's warm affection and admiration for his Lord surged forth like an out-

burst of the Old Faithful Geyser in Yellowstone Park. He burst out in the first moment, *"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."* It was the great confession and it told the truth and won the warmest commendation of the Master. A few moments later Jesus was foretelling his sufferings and his crucifixion for the first time; and Peter, with the same impulsiveness, burst out into hot remonstrance: "Let nothing of this sort ever happen to thee, Lord! This never shall be!" He knew that the Master knew more and better than he; but he acted on the impulse of the moment and without thinking, as we so often do. He got his just deserts in the great rebuke: *"Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men."*

Peter might be all right one moment and all wrong the next moment. His nature was something like that Sea of Galilee upon which he had spent his life as a fisherman—peaceful and placid in one hour and lashed into a sudden fury of tempest in another hour. You never could tell what was coming next with Peter. There was nothing tame or commonplace about him. He was as full of contradictions and inconsistencies as any of us. He always seemed to be in motion, like a pendulum, reacting from one extreme to another.

Jesus rebuked Peter more than once, but he

always liked him. Paul rebuked Peter to his very face, yet he had a sincere affection for the man. When Peter repented, Jesus forgave him, and Paul forgave him, and everybody else forgave him. Luther once said, "If I could paint a portrait of Peter, I would paint upon every hair of his head: 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins.'" Why was it that everybody could forgive Peter so readily? Because they realized that his faults were not radically faults at heart. He might seem to be like Reuben—unstable as water—, but that was only on the surface of his character. Down deep in his nature there was the abiding loyalty and right purpose which endeared him to all. No one ever questioned his love for Jesus. It was his love and his loyalty that prompted his most foolish conduct as well as his most noble behavior. Love prompted the great confession and love prompted the speech that brought the great rebuke.

At the bottom of his character there was the bedrock of an unflinching faith in the Master and an unfailing loyalty to him. That was the only foundation upon which the Christian Church could be built. Peter was the rock apostle in that church. At Pentecost, Peter was the spokesman, and under the hot flood of his eloquence three thousand souls were swept into the church in one day. Peter opened the door of the Christian Church to Cor-

nelius and other Gentiles. He was the leader in the beginning. That beginning work might not have been done as well by a rabbi or a seer or a philosopher or a theologian; but Peter was so hearty and so human that he won sympathy both for himself and for his Master wherever he went. The church was well founded. Others may have thought more deeply, but no one among the apostles was more devoted to the cause than he.

Peter was a growing man. He improved with old age. His sanguine temperament cooled down a little through the years. His ardor and devotion remained, but they were not so liable to hasty and ill-considered manifestations. Peter grew in grace as long as he lived. The horizon widened before him until he could see as far as the apostle Paul. There is no more rounded or stronger character in the early church than the apostle Peter, of whom we get glimpses in his Epistle and in the later church tradition. He is the acknowledged leader among his brethren, but never arrogating any undue authority unto himself. He is courteous and courageous, humble and brave, obedient to God rather than to hostile men, so changed for the better that his very presence was a constant recommendation of the faith he professed. The richness of his Christian character was a proof of what Christianity could do for the weakest and poorest material.

Peter was a saint in his later years—a saint with some faults and a saint liable to err on some occasions, but, after all, a saint worthy to stand at the head of the forming church as a supreme example of the transforming power it proclaimed to all men. A character like that of Peter would convict and convince and attract the average man even more than the character of John and Paul: his enthusiasm was so contagious, his transformation was so marvelous, and his needs and abilities and achievements were so patently within the reach of all. He was a founder and a leader worthy of the Master's choice.

For Further Thought

Which would you prefer in a character—enthusiasm or caution?

Which do you think are better—impulses or reflections?

Who do you think would make the more mistakes—a Hamlet or a Peter?

Books for Reading and Study

Horæ Petrinæ: Studies in the Life of St. Peter, Howson.

Simon Peter: His Early Life, Robinson.

Simon Peter: His Later Life and Labors, Robinson.

The Apostle Peter, Griffith-Thomas.

The Making of Simon Peter, Southouse.

CHAPTER VII

PAUL THE MISSIONARY

PAUL believed that all the circumstances of his birth and early training had helped to prepare him for his work as a missionary among the Gentiles. To see that clearly we need only review the facts in the case. In the first place, Paul was born in a Jewish family and reared in the Jewish faith. This gave him ready access to the synagogues in every city he visited and a hearing among his own countrymen, to whom he always preached first and by preference. In the second place, Paul's father was a Roman citizen, and that meant that Paul himself was born into Roman citizenship, and all his life long he claimed and enjoyed all the privileges of that right. In the third place, Paul was born in Tarsus in Asia Minor, and that city was a Greek city. In that way the young lad became familiar with Greek customs and culture and was prepared to deal with the Greek-speaking peoples.

According to the custom among the Jews of that day every Jewish boy was taught a trade;

and Paul was trained as a tentmaker. He found his knowledge of this trade very useful to him in his later ministry, when it was necessary to support himself by day labor in order that he might have leisure to preach at night. In the fifth place, Paul's parents sent him to Jerusalem, where he entered the school of Gamaliel for his finishing education. Gamaliel was a good man, more tolerant than most of the Jewish masters; and in his school Paul became familiar with the Scriptures and their current interpretation. He advanced beyond many of his own age in knowledge and in zeal and became the trusted servant of the Sanhedrin in laying waste the Christian churches and driving the Christian faith out of existence.

He was on his way to Damascus on this mission of persecution and destruction when he had a most extraordinary experience. The risen Jesus appeared to him, convinced him of his identity and majesty, and then, when Paul had offered his allegiance, commissioned him to do the work the Jewish nation had refused to do in witnessing to the Messiahship of Jesus and in turning the Gentiles from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God. One man was set in a nation's stead! One man was asked to do a nation's work! Paul was chosen to be a world missionary and in his after life he proved by his unparalleled zeal and

success that he was worthy to receive such a world commission.

Paul took time to prepare for his missionary career. His Jewish birth, his Roman citizenship and his Greek environment, his trade and his schooling, his conversion and his commission, were all of them helps and preparations for his work; but he did not feel ready for that work until he had gone down into Arabia and there, through possibly three years, had studied the Scriptures and, with their aid and with the aid of his experience, had formulated his theology. He thought the thing through. He knew what he had to preach before he began his Christian ministry. Then, in Syria and Cilicia, for ten years or more, he made practical experiment of methods and truths and laid the foundations for the successes of his later years. After three years of theological study and ten years of apprenticeship in missionary labor he was prepared to enter upon more responsible work.

He was called to Antioch to assist in the affairs of the church there; and from Antioch, Barnabas and he were sent out on what is called the first missionary journey. Their first work was in Cyprus. From this island they crossed to Perga, in Pamphylia, and then went on to Antioch in Pisidia, and then to Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. They returned by the way they came. They had traveled about

fourteen hundred miles and, in the three years, had established Christian churches in four cities, at least, and probably in many more.

From Antioch, Paul and Silas undertook a second missionary journey together. They visited the churches of Syria and Cilicia and then traveled westward to Troas, on the seacoast. There Paul had a vision that led the missionaries to conclude that they ought to enter the continent of Europe. The first European church was founded in Philippi in Macedonia; the next, in Thessalonica. Then Berea and Athens and Corinth were visited in succession. In Corinth the missionaries made a considerable stay and founded a large and prosperous Christian community. After an absence of two years and a half they returned to Antioch, having traveled possibly some twenty-five hundred miles and having made a good beginning in the evangelization of Europe.

The third missionary journey included a visit to the churches of Galatia and Phrygia and then a stay of two years and more in Ephesus, followed by a rapid trip through Macedonia and Greece, and then a homeward journey through Troas, Miletus, Tyre, and Cæsarea to Jerusalem. There Paul was arrested, and his active missionary career came to an end. He was a missionary as long as he lived, but he was not a free man again until after his re-

lease from the imprisonment in Rome. He had planned missionary work in Spain, but we are not sure that he ever was able to reach that goal.

Paul labored more abundantly than any of the other apostles. Peter began the good work, but Paul carried it far beyond any possibilities Peter could have attained. Best prepared by all his early training and advantage for a world mission, he was the chosen vessel of the Lord to inaugurate the campaign for the world's evangelization. His consecration was complete; his courage never failed. There were many dangers to face on the land and on the sea. There were suffering and sacrifice of every sort. There were incredible toils and continual hardships. Through them all Paul approved himself as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. His patience and perseverance were unsurpassed; his devotion and consecration were unparalleled. His one aim was the conversion of men to the faith and practice of the Christian life. He was willing to give all his time and strength to that end. With truth could he say:

> "Then with a rush the intolerable craving
> Shivers throughout me like a trumpet-call—
> Oh, to save these! to perish for their saving,
> Die for their life, be offered for them all!"

Paul was the world's greatest missionary, as he was one of the world's greatest intellects and one of the world's greatest saints. Jesus had confined his

ministry to the province of Palestine and to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Peter had neither the learning nor the adaptability necessary for a campaign among the Gentiles: he was the apostle to the circumcision and limited his activities to his own countrymen. Paul was prepared to face the philosophers at Athens and the politicians at Rome. He could be all things to all men and by natural equipment and acquired education was ready to carry the gospel message to the ends of the earth. In his missionary career Christianity was borne out of Palestine into the wide world and established as a faith no longer local but aspiring to the conquest of all men for the service of its Master and Lord.

Consider the Questions

Has God a purpose and plan for each life? Has he for your life? Can you give any proof or illustration?

Have modern missionaries traveled or suffered more than Paul? Can you name any who have?

Why is Paul called the greatest of the missionaries?

Books for Reading and Study

Paul the Missionary, Taylor.

St. Paul the Traveler and Roman Citizen, Ramsay.

Studies of the Man Paul, Speer.

CHAPTER VIII

PAUL THE PASTOR

The Epistles addressed to Timothy and to Titus have been called the pastoral Epistles, because so large a portion of their contents have to do with pastoral duties and responsibilities. Some have thought that the two Epistles written to the Corinthians deserve this title even more, because the deep-seated principles governing pastoral relations and service and authority are set forth here with such clearness and fullness. Almost any page or any chapter in the Pauline Epistles would furnish valuable suggestions concerning Paul the pastor; and much information on the subject can be gleaned from the narratives in the book of Acts. For the purpose of our study the picture given of the apostle in the beginning of the second chapter of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians will be sufficient. This was the first of the Pauline Epistles to be written, but the characteristics of Paul's pastoral activity given here were those of the whole of his missionary ministry. What does he say about it?

He declares that opposition and shameful treatment and persecution and suffering never daunted

him, but rather increased his boldness in preaching the gospel. Paul was no coward. He had the courage of his convictions. Antagonism bred heroism in him. Unflinchingly faithful to the cause of the Christ, he was ready to do and to die in behalf of the truth. The message given him through Ananias at the time of his conversion was: *"I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake."* Paul foresaw the suffering and the sacrifice of his career and deliberately committed himself to it. Thereafter if he was treated shamefully in one city and driven out from it into another he preached with increased boldness at the next opportunity.

Paul claimed and believed that he preached the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. His freedom of speech in the delivery of his message rested upon the full assurance of his faith. He had no misgivings as to the importance of his gospel; he had no secret doubts concerning it to conceal. To his mind there was no error in the substance of his preaching: it was essential to the world's salvation and was the highest truth ever offered to the race. Paul says that he preached a gospel of purity. There was no admixture of uncleanness in it, such as was characteristic of the heathen religions with which it came into contact and contrast; the Christian faith demanded purity

in speech and action and motive. Paul believed that a Christian man ought to be clean in everything. He practiced what he preached, allowing no place for error or uncleanness or guile, in his conduct or his discourses. Open and aboveboard in his dealings with everyone, he was honest and direct in his appeals. Paul never deceived anybody. He never tried to catch them with guile but only with the attractive power of the straight and unadulterated truth.

Paul made no attempt to curry favor with men by compromising with the facts of the case. He never flattered them into thinking that they were not sinners or that they were good enough to get along without salvation. He was no man-pleaser; he sought for the approval of God and was satisfied when he was assured that the God who proves the hearts of men was pleased with him. Nor was Paul a self-seeker. He neither asked for glory nor for money from men. Although he might have claimed authority as an apostle of Christ he always was among men as one who serves. He made of his office not a dignity but an opportunity. God was his witness that there was no covetousness, either of money or of reputation, in his ministry. He sought nothing but the good of those among whom he labored and desired above all things that they might be saved.

To that end Paul was gentle and sympathetic with all. Like a nurse he ministered to all their needs; like a mother he cherished his converts and lavished his affection upon them and was ready to sacrifice time and strength and life itself in their behalf. They were dear to him, and it was not simply a duty but also a delight to minister to them. Paul worked for them day and night. His ministry was filled with labor and travail. No one was permitted to suffer because of his indifference and neglect. His physical and mental powers were spent in the full proof of his devotion. He knew what utter exhaustion meant in his pastoral labors, travailing until men and women were born again into the kingdom of God.

Paul appealed to his people even as he appealed unto God to bear witness that he had behaved himself holily, righteously, and unblamably among them at all times. Careful about his conduct, he had brought no disgrace upon his profession; he had lived a holy life. He had been righteous in all his dealings. No one could blame him for anything he had done. His character was above reproach. He had been an example to the flock. His people could imitate him even as he imitated Christ. They knew just what he was, for they had come to know him intimately and personally.

Paul dealt with his people in their homes, as a

father with his children. Not satisfied with preaching at them from a pulpit, he came to close quarters in personal conversation and private admonition and instruction. In this way he came to know their individual needs and could exhort and encourage them as each case demanded. He told them all that God called them into his own kingdom and glory, exhorting them all to walk worthily of God. He followed up his exhortations with personal visits and conversations until he was sure that his work was not in vain. It was slow work but sure work and was remarkably successful. It captured heathen strongholds and turned them into centers of the Christian faith.

These are the characteristics of Paul's pastoral work: It was full of boldness and assurance, truthful, guileless, clean, free from flattery and self-seeking, full of sympathy and affection, filled with labor and travail, holy, righteous, unblamable, dealing with individuals, and eminently and continuously successful. It is a model to all Christian workers for all time.

For Your Deliberation

Which do you consider the more important—preaching or pastoral work?

From which have you received the more good through your own life?

What characteristics would you list for an ideal pastor? What would you add to Paul's list here?

Books for Reading and Study

The Pastoral Teaching of St. Paul, Chadwick.
Paul the Mystic, Campbell.
St. Paul the Master-Builder, Lock.

CHAPTER IX

PAUL THE STATESMAN AND WRITER

Paul had a wider outlook than any of the other apostles. He took the whole world for his parish, believing that the kingdom of his Christ would be a far more glorious kingdom than that represented by the empire of Rome. It would be a spiritual kingdom, even as Jesus had taught; and it would be endless in duration and limitless in power, gathering into itself all the nations of men, unifying and making of them one great brotherhood in the Christian faith. Paul set out to be a world conqueror. There was no limit to his holy ambition except the limit of his physical strength. His plans always outran his possibilities. As a pioneer missionary he would have gone everywhere if that had been possible to one man in one lifetime.

As it was, Paul labored more abundantly than any other apostle, doing all that one man could do. He attacked the strategic centers, working for the most part in the great cities and making of them centers of influence for all the surrounding communities. He insisted that his Gentile converts should be free

from the old Jewish ordinances, for he realized that new peoples must have new viewpoints and new customs. Paul refused to put new wine into old bottles. He did not attempt to force an Oriental Christianity upon the Occident. As long as it was true to the fundamentals of the common faith, he was ready to leave every nation free to develop a Christianity of its own type. He knew that a world-wide church could not be a church of universal uniformity in matters of opinion and manners of life; it would represent unity in difference, unity in spirit and the essentials of the faith, with widest liberty in everything else. Paul's statesmanship was manifest in his tolerance, his charity, and his practical methods for the successful prosecution of the campaign for the conquest of the world for his Christ.

As the great general and organizer of this aggressive missionary work Paul traveled more widely, established more churches, made his influence felt in more of the great cities, evangelized more people, and was more successful in his more abundant labors than any of the older apostles. At the same time Paul added more to the literature of the primitive church than any other member of the apostolic circle, being the pioneer in this field as in so many others. Most if not all of his Epistles appeared before the Gospels or any of the other books of the

New Testament were written. There are thirteen of these Epistles, not including the Epistle to the Hebrews, which probably was written by some member of the Pauline circle, rather than by Paul himself.

It is a curious fact that, so far as we know, Paul wrote nothing during the first fifteen years of his life as a Christian; and then, in the last fifteen years, he wrote these thirteen Epistles. It is another curious fact that the thirteen Epistles were written at four different periods in these fifteen years and therefore fall into four groups separated from each other by intervals of approximately five years each. Paul's literary work presents this strange appearance of periodicity. For fifteen years he wrote nothing. Then he wrote two Epistles, First and Second Thessalonians, within one year—about A. D. 53. Nothing more did he write for about five years. Then he composed First and Second Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans, probably within one year's time—about A. D. 58. After another interval of five years he wrote Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians, and sent three of them at one time, by one messenger, from Rome to Asia Minor about A. D. 63. After another interval of nearly five years Paul wrote First Timothy, Titus, and Second Timothy about A. D. 67.

These four groups were, in their order, those of

the second missionary journey, those of the third missionary journey, those of the first Roman imprisonment, and those written between Paul's liberation from the first Roman imprisonment and his second imprisonment, ending in his martyrdom. Different names have been given to these groups by different persons. These names may not exactly describe the several groups but may serve to label and distinguish them. In their order they have been called the primer Epistles, the pillar Epistles, the prison Epistles, and the pastoral Epistles. In their relation to Paul's ministry these groups have been called the missionary, the evangelical, the edificatory, and the valedictory. With reference to their style or manner they have been distinguished as the didactic, the argumentative, the contemplative, and the hortatory. As to their contents they have been classified as the ones presenting the theology of the last things, the theology of salvation, the theology of the person of Christ, and the theology and discipline of the church.

Paul surpassed all others in his missionary and evangelistic zeal and success and, in addition, has made the church and the world his debtor by the writing of these Epistles, which formulated the Christian theology and set the standard for the Christian life through all the centuries. One writer has said of them: "They compress more ideas into

fewer words than any other writings, human or divine, except the Gospels. They are of more real and genuine value to the church than all her later systems of theology. For eighteen hundred years they have nourished the faith of Christendom and will do so to the end of time." It has been said of the Epistle to the Romans that "the intelligence and stability of any generation of believers is exactly proportioned to the degree in which this marrowy and masculine treatise is studied and understood and appreciated," and that statement might be made to include all the Pauline Epistles. Luther found the watchword of the Protestant Reformation, "justification by faith," in the writings of Paul; and Wesley got the inspiration for his great revival movement from the same source. All the revivals of church history have based themselves upon the teachings of Paul, and it is safe to predict that this will be true until the missionary and evangelistic work of the church is done.

Augustine was converted by reading a sentence in one of Paul's Epistles. Martin Luther was converted by a study of Paul's doctrine of salvation by faith. John Wesley was converted while listening to the reading of Martin Luther's preface to Paul's Epistle to the Romans. What names can equal these three in their particular fields? Augustine was the great theologian, Luther the great re-

former, and Wesley the great evangelist. They were converted by the study of the writings of Paul, the theologian, reformer, evangelist, missionary statesman, and author without a peer. We too would do well to study these writings.

Questions to Ponder

What is the difference between a mere missionary and a statesman-missionary? Can you illustrate the latter class?

Tell why you would call these missionaries also statesmen.

Which would you consider more valuable to the church—Paul's work or his writing?

Which would you prefer to be—a great author or a great statesman? Why?

Books for Reading and Study

The Life and Epistles of Paul, Conybeare and Howson.

The Life and Work of St. Paul, Farrar.

Paul of Tarsus, Bird.

Paul and His Epistles, Hayes.

CHAPTER X

THE UNKNOWN APOSTOLATE

Peter and Paul are the two heroes of the book of Acts. Others of the apostles and evangelists of the new faith are mentioned, but the larger part of the book has to do with the work of these two men. The four Gospels give us the history of Jesus, and the book of Acts gives us the history of the beginnings of the Christian church as founded by Peter and propagated by Paul. There are no other historical books in the New Testament; and when the narrative of these books fails us, we are left to conjecture or to tradition for all our details of information in this field. We are told that Thomas went to India with the gospel message, that Peter preached in Rome, and that John labored for many years in Ephesus and throughout Asia Minor. There are apocryphal Acts of Peter, Paul, John, Andrew, and Thomas; but little confidence can be given to their absurd fabrications. For three centuries of Christian history we have no biographies of any of the missionaries or members of the Christian Church which will compare with those of Peter and Paul

in the book of Acts. We know little or nothing of their conversions or the development of their characters or the methods and measures of their success.

Yet in these three centuries the Christian faith was spread through the whole of the civilized world of that day. At the close of the third century the empire had been conquered by the faithful preachers of the Christian truth. The emperor professed to be a Christian. The heathen religions were overthrown. Christianity was the dominant power in the world. How was this great change brought about? Who was responsible for this great victory? There is no one outstanding personality to whom the credit must be given. The work was done, and the great triumph won by the unknown apostolate—the humble workers in the rank and file whose names are in the book of life, but whose labors were not recorded in any history either within or without the Holy Book.

When the risen Jesus appeared to the assembled disciples he said to them, *"Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you."* In the Epistle to the Hebrews, Jesus is called *"the Apostle . . . of our confession."* The Father had sent him to proclaim his will and to preach his gospel, and in that upper room Jesus commissioned his disciples to carry on the work he had begun. Not only the twelve but all his followers were to

be apostles of the faith. In the New Testament the name "apostle" is given to the twelve and to Paul, Barnabas, Silas, Andronicus, and Junias; and there seems to be no definite limitation to its application among the missionary preachers of the Christian faith. Anyone who was "sent forth" by the Father and by the church to devote himself to the spread of the gospel through the world was a recognized apostle, and it is in this wider sense of the term that we use it here. There were those in the church who were set apart for continuous itinerant evangelistic work. They traveled from place to place and without salary sought to proclaim the truth and to make converts to the faith. They were in a sense public officials, and their work was that of pioneers. They may have laid the foundations, but the church was built and established in each community by the faithful few who remained at their posts and exemplified the good of the Christian faith in their lives. A brother brought a brother into the Christian brotherhood, and a friend brought a friend. Most of the converts came into the church in that way, as the result of personal effort on the part of neighbors and friends. Peter was convinced by a private conversation. Nathanael was brought to investigate by the newfound joy of his fellow townsman. The eunuch was converted by a roadside talk. Timothy was made a Christian by a

mother's instructions and a grandmother's prayers. These New Testament examples are types of the methods God has blessed most in the whole history of the church. Zealous new converts like Andrew and Philip the apostle, colporteurs and evangelists like Philip the deacon, faithful Christian mothers and grandmothers like Eunice and Lois, have from the very beginning sought out friends and neighbors, talked to strangers and to sons, told of their own newfound revelation of truth and their own experience of salvation and satisfaction for their minds and their souls; and more people have been brought into the church in that way than in any other.

It was no easy task to be a Christian, and it was no easy task to make a Christian in those beginning days of church history. It never is an easy thing to turn the world upside down while you yourself are living in it and on it; yet that is what the Christians set out to do. They had to combat the prejudices and the customs established through the centuries; they had to undermine and overthrow the ancient idolatries; they had to turn a sinning and licentious heathen world into the kingdom of the Lord Christ. The priests were against them, the political powers were against them, and all the forces of evil were active then as now to prevent the triumph of righteousness upon the earth. Yet

one by one individuals were attracted, convinced, and converted; and every transformed life became an epistle read and known of all in his acquaintance. Every Christian was a sermon in shoes; and Jews and Samaritans and barbarians and Greeks and Romans, officials and philosophers, soldiers and slaves, heard the message, saw the results, and concluded that the Christian faith was worth having both for this life and the life that was to come.

In this way the faith swept over the lands. It "spread from generation to generation with inconceivable rapidity. Seventy years after the foundation of the very first Gentile Christian church in Syrian Antioch, Pliny wrote in the strongest terms about the spread of Christianity throughout remote Bithynia—a spread which in his view already threatened the stability of other cults throughout the province. Seventy years later still the Paschal controversy reveals the existence of a Christian federation of churches, stretching from Lyons to Edessa, with its headquarters situated at Rome. Seventy years later, again, the Emperor Decius declared he would sooner have a rival emperor in Rome than a Christian bishop. And ere another seventy years had passed, the cross was sewn upon the Roman colors." This is the conclusion reached at the end of the second volume of Harnack's study of the expansion of Christianity. He thinks that

the church fathers were justified in their belief that the Christian faith had had a most astonishing and unparalleled growth in the world.

What were the reasons for this world conquest? There were two reasons: first, the gospel itself; and second, the unknown apostles, who believed it and received it and realized it and lived it and preached it in both life and death. The gospel itself was superior to all other world faiths. It all centered about the person, the life, the words, and the works of Jesus, the crucified and risen Lord. He was a Saviour—a Saviour from sin. He had taught the universal Fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man. The love and charity he had commanded were made possible through the Holy Spirit he had promised and had sent. The Christian church had an authoritative Book, an adaptable organization, a mystical experience, practical methods of social relief, a spiritual power transforming individuals and reforming communities and promising a new and better world. Its converts were its testimonials; its recruits were its evangelists. The unknown apostles carried its banners to victory. They believed that they had the gospel of life and immortality, and that their Jesus was to be King over all.

At the end of the second century Tertullian wrote to the heathen: "We are but of yesterday. Yet we

have filled all your places—cities, villages, markets, the camp itself, the palace, the senate, the forum. All we have left to you is your temples." There were leaders in this army of world conquerors, but the work was done mainly and almost wholly by the rank and file, unknown to the world histories but apostles of the Father and his gospel for men and with their names written and known in the records of heaven. They were heroes too—heroic in effort and, some of them, in martyrdom. We give them the immeasurable credit which is their due.

For You to Think About

Which would you prefer—a great leader or a faithful church?

Are there apostles in the church to-day? Do you know any?

What would you consider the duties of an apostle to-day?

What reasons have you for thinking that Christianity ever will be a world religion?

Books for Reading and Study

The Expansion of Christianity, Harnack.

The Times of the Apostles, Hausrath.

History of the Christian Church: Vol. I, *Apostolic Christianity:* Vol. II, *Ante-Nicene Christianity,* Schaff.

CHAPTER XI

JOHN THE BELOVED

PETER preached at Pentecost and organized the Jewish Christian Church; Paul was the chosen vessel to carry the gospel message through Gentile lands. John is known as the disciple whom Jesus loved. Peter was the originator, a bold aggressive spirit capable of splendid and audacious things; Paul united intellectual force and practical energy and was the able and successful champion of Christianity before the bar of the world. John was intuitive and receptive, subordinate to these great leaders in the beginning but outliving them both and carrying on and completing their work to the end of the first Christian century.

In all probability John was born in Bethsaida, the city of Peter and Andrew and Philip. His father's name was Zebedee, and his mother's name Salome. James was his brother—probably older, since his name usually precedes that of John when they are mentioned together in the New Testament books. The family seems to have been comparatively well to do, having servants in their employ. Salome ministered to Jesus and his disciples of her sub-

stance. John received Mary the mother of Jesus into his own home after the crucifixion. John and James aspired to the chief places in the kingdom and asked to sit the one on the right hand, and the other on the left hand of the King when he came to be enthroned.

Salome was a good woman and a good mother, probably giving her sons religious training. As soon as John the Baptist began preaching at the Jordan, her two sons were attracted by the new prophetic note in his message and became his disciples. When John the Baptist pointed out Jesus as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, they became the disciples of Jesus. When the apostolic band of twelve was formed, John and James belonged to the first group of four, sharing that honor with Peter and Andrew. When the Master chose three of his disciples to be with him in the raising of the daughter of Jairus and on the mount of transfiguration and in the garden of Gethsemane, John and James were two of the three, and Peter alone ranked with them. When two of the disciples were sent to prepare for that last Passover meal, Peter and John were the two appointed to that task. At the Last Supper the place nearest the Master was reserved for his favorite among the twelve, and that place was yielded without question to John.

John was the last of the apostles to remain near the cross on which the Master was hung and was the first of the apostles to reach the open tomb on the resurrection day. He was also the first of them to grasp the resurrection faith. He was with the disciples in the upper room at the time of the baptism at Pentecost and was one of the leaders of the church in Jerusalem for some years following that great experience. Tradition says that he moved later to Ephesus and, being exiled to the island of Patmos, there had the visions of the book of Revelation, setting forth the struggles and the victories of the Christian Church. Later he wrote the fourth Gospel and the three short Epistles that bear his name. He was the last of the apostles to survive and lived to near the close of the first Christian century. In his last years all tradition unites in affirming that he was the beloved leader of the church, reverenced for his saintliness and for the fact that during Christ's ministry he had been the Master's most beloved disciple and friend.

What gave John this position of preeminence in the apostolic company? What made him the disciple whom Jesus loved? It must have been that his character was such as to be attractive to Jesus, and it must have been that John loved Jesus more than any of the other disciples did. Love begets love. Affinity of spirit is found in likeness of aim

and disposition. John had a very real love for Jesus, and his character was most like that of his Lord. Therefore, he stood nearest to Jesus and was dearest to him. That was the greatest distinction anyone could win. What made John so lovable to Jesus? What were the elements of his character which drew him to Jesus and in turn drew Jesus to him?

Jesus called John and James "Sons of thunder." They were men who could flash fire upon occasion. Both James and John had a high degree of moral strength, a sublime courage that did not fail in critical times, and intense convictions that were not swayed by every breeze. They were capable of a holy heroism that would enable them to drink of the cup of which the Master drank without flinching from the supreme sacrifice. James was the first of the apostles to be martyred. His boldness and his courage made him a marked man among the Christians, and he was the first to suffer the extreme penalty for his loyalty to the cause. John was just as brave and as loyal as he, and it is one of the strange providences of God that he was permitted to outlive all the other apostles and then to die a natural and peaceful death. He thundered against sin and sinners as long as he lived. Jesus loved him for his loyalty to the truth and the singleness of his devotion and his manifest hatred for all that was

opposed to the Master and his cause. He was like Jesus in refusing to compromise with evil or to call things by any but their right names.

John could be filled with righteous indignation. At times he could flame with holy anger. A man can call other men the children of the devil and fools and hypocrites and snakes and the offspring of snakes and still be a saint. We know that is true because Jesus did it. John was like Jesus. He called Judas a devil and the son of perdition, and said that every sinner was a child of the devil, that every professing Christian who walked in the darkness of sin was a liar, and that everyone who hated his brother was a murderer. He was a son of thunder when it came to denouncing unrighteousness of any kind. He was as vehement in language as Jesus himself, and Jesus loved him for his uncompromising fidelity.

John was attracted by goodness and strength. John the Baptist seemed to him a great genius with genuine prophetic fire, so he left his nets to become John's disciple. Jesus was greater than John the Baptist, so all the devotion of the young man's life was laid at his feet. In the company of the apostles Peter seemed to be the strongest character, and John attached himself to him; and after the Master's death Peter and John seem to have been inseparable companions. He was a modest, un-

assuming, self-effacing, devoted companion and helper to these men, and they all prized him highly for his reverence and love.

John was a seer. His eyes were the first to recognize Jesus on the shore of the sea when he appeared to the disciples after the resurrection. It was intuition as much as vision which led him to say with all certainty, "It is the Lord." He apparently saw deep into the heart of Jesus, and that made him capable of remembering and recording the great spiritual truths of the fourth Gospel. He saw further into the future history of the church than did any of his fellow apostles, and that made him capable of picturing the struggles and the triumphs of the church to the very end. The eagle is his symbol. His keen eye could see beyond the clouds and could look steadily into the face of the Fountain of Light and Truth.

John had the simplicity of the child in his character. He had the child's intuition of goodness and admiration for greatness. After the deaths of Peter and Paul he came to the place of primacy in the Christian Church. Peter had laid the foundations, and Paul had built a stately structure; John put the pinnacles and the finishing touches upon the edifice of the Christian faith. He had been the first of the three to come to Jesus. In the providence of God he was reserved to the last to complete the

work of the apostolic age. Peter is the apostle of hope, Paul the apostle of faith, and John the apostle of love, which is the greatest of all.

For Thoughtful Consideration

Would you have loved John more than any other apostle? If so, why?

Do you think a radical or a conservative is the more useful to the church, and why?

How do John's style and thought compare with those of Peter and Paul?

Books for Reading and Study

John, Whom Jesus Loved, Culross.
The Two Johns of the New Testament, Stalker.
John and His Writings, Hayes.

CHAPTER XII

HOW THE NEW TESTAMENT WAS WRITTEN

The New Testament church was a church without the New Testament. It had a Bible, but its Bible was the Old Testament. If the preachers of the new faith had any book in their hands, it was the book of the Old Testament Scriptures. They found many of their texts and much of the substance of their preaching in that volume and read from it for their edification, finding much in it which was profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. They had no other sacred book to put beside it as we put the New Testament beside the Old Testament in our Bibles to-day. Paul may have lived and died without seeing a written Gospel. He knew all about the gospel message and he preached it with power wherever he went, but it may be that he never saw a Gospel in manuscript or book form. It was almost a generation after the death of Jesus before the first of our Gospels was written, and at

least two generations had passed away before the last of our Gospels came into existence. Three or four centuries passed before the various books that made up our New Testament were collected into a single volume. For the first one hundred and fifty years of our era the Old Testament was the one and only sacred volume in the Christian Church. The New Testament church, the church of the first fifty or sixty years of our era, had no New Testament.

It is interesting to remember that in the beginning the Christian Church had no book of its own upon which to rely for its authority either in form of organization or in substance of faith, as the Mohammedans had in the Koran, or the Mormons in the Book of Mormon, or the Christian Scientists in Science and Health. The Christian Church was not founded upon a book. The church came first, and the book came afterward, just as the great war came first, and a flood of books about the war came later. Jesus founded the church, and he founded it upon his own life and teaching and preaching. We have no record of his writing anything except when he wrote a few words with his finger in the dust of the Temple floor, and we do not know what those words were. He was content with self-revelation in his daily life and his spoken words. He wrote no books and did not command

the writing of any books; and for years after his death no one of his disciples thought of writing a book.

It is easy to see why this was true. In the first place, the apostles were not literary men. No one of them ever had written a book; and as laborers, men of the open air rather than of the study or the library or the school, they had no liking for writing. They could tell their story wherever they went and they much preferred telling it to writing it. It was much easier for unlettered Galilæans to talk than to write.

Then, in the second place, that was all the Master had asked them to do. He had told them to go into all the world and preach his gospel to every creature. They could do that and they could do it well. They were qualified witnesses. They had important news to tell and they could not but speak the things which they had seen and heard. Their incessant evangelism left them little or no time for writing even if they had had any inclination for it.

In the third place, it was the custom in all the Jewish schools for all the instruction to be given orally. No rabbi committed anything to writing. It was his business simply to interpret and not to write anything new. As far as the disciples were influenced by the traditions and the prejudices of their race they would not think of sitting down to

write either a history or a biography or a manual of doctrine.

Then, in the fourth place, all of the first disciples seem to have had the idea that their Lord would soon return. If he were coming a second time, and coming soon, what need was there of writing anything about his first coming? He soon would be on hand himself to say and do all that was necessary for the good of his church. For all these reasons we can see how natural it was for the first generation of Christian believers to be content without any written memorials of their faith.

Sir Thomas More was right when he said that the gospel was first spread abroad through the world by words and preaching without writing of any sort, that the faith came into men's ears and was written in men's hearts before any word of it was written in a book, and that no evangelist and no apostle ever sent the faith to any nation in writing until they were informed that God had begun his church in that place; and Sir Thomas adds that he has no doubt that if the gospel never had been written, the substance of the faith never would have fallen out of Christian hearts, but the same Spirit who first planted it would have preserved it there and have increased it through the years. That may be true; yet we may be profoundly thankful that in process of time the New Testament was

a felt need in the church, and that when the need was felt it was supplied.

As long as Jesus and the apostles lived they were final authorities on all matters of the faith; but the substance of their teaching had to be repeated by others; and as different persons gave different reports, it became necessary to have some recognized standard that would be an authority upon all these things.

Somebody wrote down a collection of the sayings of Jesus first of all. Many undertook to make a narrative of his life. Mark made a record of the preaching of Peter. Matthew combined the sources at hand into another, longer book. Luke, the Gentile, with the Greek historians as his models, worked over the same gospel story and made extensive additions out of his personal investigations and put it all into more literary form. He wrote for a friend and patron named Theophilus, and his account of the life of Jesus was so satisfactory that the same patron asked him to write another book giving the account of the growth of the Christian Church from Jerusalem to Rome. So Luke wrote the book of Acts.

These writings sufficed the church until all the apostles except Andrew and John had died. Then John wrote a fourth Gospel—a more spiritual and more doctrinal narrative, supplementing and com-

pleting the accounts of the other three. He had written the book of Revelation some twenty or thirty years before, and his second and third Epistles; and he appended the first Epistle to his Gospel narrative as a sort of practical summary of its contents. Other Epistles had been written during the first century by Paul and Peter and James and Jude, and some unknown author had composed our Epistle addressed to the Hebrews alone. These Epistles were either called forth by special emergencies in local churches or were sent out as circular letters for use in whole districts or in the whole church.

At first there was no thought of using them as Scriptures or of collecting them into a sacred Book. It was only when heretics began to claim apostolic authority for their doctrines that the church began to realize that it ought to have a recognized list of books to which it could appeal as final authority in setting forth the apostolic faith. Then the writings of the apostles and of the apostolic days began to be collected. They had been scattered here and there throughout the church; but as copies were exchanged, every added book became a treasure and was read in the public services, establishing itself in the confidence and the esteem of the people. At last church councils and other church authorities officially determined a list of books containing the Christian verity as having come down from apos-

tolic times and as having proved their usefulness for edification in the church.

The New Testament books, written in the first century, were recognized as Scriptures in another century and in two more centuries had established themselves as an authoritative canon, equal to the Old Testament in value and superior to it in revelation, in the Christian Church.

For Further Thought and Study

Do you think it would have been an advantage to have a certified verbatim report of the teaching of Jesus? If so, why?

How do you think a New Testament book ought to be certified?

What books of the New Testament do you regard as the most valuable, and why?

Do you know any books outside the New Testament as valuable to you as some of the New Testament books?

Books for Reading and Study

The Gospel History and Its Transmission, Burkitt.

The Making of the New Testament, Bacon.

The Rise of the New Testament, Muzzey.

S0-ERJ-802